

45

6/17/2015

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Fwd: Request to assure Safety on the Water for all users in area N. of Mesquite Bay to Refuge

Eastern shallow, narrow channel to the designated non-ski area entering the Refuge before a fatality occurs. We wish to assure that all watercraft users be allowed to safely travel this area without fear of bodily harm or watercraft vessel "assault".

The Sheriff's Dept. states there are numerous complaints annually in this area and they are unable to patrol there due to shallow depth of water so it is not in their jurisdiction. USFW states they have limited man-power and will attempt to patrol more. State Parks states they do not patrol in there. We have been informed that USCG patrols on the lake on limited times/occasions and not in this area.

Everyone, every agency, I have spoken to states it is just stupid and dangerous to even be skiing in there and this is not an isolated event.

Travel on the Waterways Trail downstream from Topock is a pleasurable trip in all types of watercraft: motorized or non. Travel downstream from Castle Rock, through the Refuge area is a pleasure. Trying to get to the non-motorized areas at Mesquite Bay has been harrowing and scary on a number of occasions and as reported from other Paddlers and small craft users.

This area is a "Lawless" area of flagrant Lake Bullies. Occasional "issues" will happen anywhere; this is flagrant, dangerous and life-threatening.

On the 1st "Annual Public Land's Clean-Up Day" launching from Castle Rock, exiting at the new Mesquite Bay non-motorized launch ramp one of the Kayaking participants was "waked" and swamped by a close-passing fast ski boat. I have pictures of a couple of us "rescuing" this paddler, and photos of me towing him to shore. Luckily he was a good swimmer and had a life vest on. Luckily his young daughters on another kayak did not swamp.

Recently a number of us Paddlers were in this area of narrow channel and jet skiers were racing through the reeds where the birds are. Myself and another kayaker (female senior citizens) and my senior little dog were aggressively waked and threatened repeatedly by ski boat operators and skiers operating illegally without Observers, excessive Speed & Distance violations, and then actually told by them to "leave this area".

These incidents are terrifying and preventable.

The channel on the Calif. side is designated "No Wake" and is very pleasant to travel. My husband and I have a long history of motorized watercraft, currently boat with a motorized ski boat and a jet ski. We are not opposed to motorized watercraft; however, we are proponents of Safe Boating for all users.

Before a fatality occurs, before lawsuits are filed, we wish to have an immediate closure of this area to skiing while working to get a No Wake Zone in effect.

Please advise with any and all information on how to proceed, who to contact and any other positive suggestions toward this goal.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Miller, Linda <linda\_l\_miller@fws.gov>

Tue, May 6, 2014 at 8:17 AM

To: Thomas Harvey <Thomas\_Harvey@fws.gov>

Cc: Bernard Lujan <bernard\_lujan@fws.gov>, Daryl Magnuson <Daryl\_Magnuson@fws.gov>

Morning Tom. I just got off the phone with Officer Rice and plan to call (b)(6) later this morning to discuss. I plan to discuss the potential for creating the new no wake zone she mentions and will outline the steps in the process; appropriate use, compatibility determination, public comment period, etc. and hopefully she'll realize that her request for an immediate solution isn't feasible.